

OHA Inquiry – Lower Umatilla Groundwater Management Area
April 2020

- 1) Thank you, appreciation, etc..
- 2) Reminder of context (i.e. the Petition)
 - Following this call – will send letter requesting written response
 - Will be important part of EPA’s process to demonstrate to petition
- 3) Today, we are particularly interested in State and local programs and coordination efforts that mitigate the risks posed by the nitrate contamination in Umatilla and Morrow Counties, and that increase the likelihood that individual (private) well users have access to safe domestic drinking water. Share our initial impression that there is a gap relative to protection of domestic water use.
- 4) From the publicly available reports, we want to highlight some notable figures related to drinking water well contamination to put the conversation in perspective:
 - The LUBGWMA Second Local Action Plan (2019) indicates 72 private wells with nitrates over the national primary drinking water standard. This report estimates that “30 – 40%” are contaminated.
 - Four synoptic events covering 255 wells (including 56 private wells from the State’s Real Estate Transaction database) show 48% of wells in LUBGWMA exceed the nitrate standard.
 - According to OHA data collected through the real estate transaction database, 10 of 55 wells tested through real estate transactions have exceeded the nitrate primary drinking water standard at some point in the past 10 years. One sample tested at 3.7 times over the nitrate drinking water standard in 2017 (36.9 ppm).

Interestingly, the information on the “Oregon Domestic Well Testing, Interactive Map” ([HYPERLINK "https://geo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=c0d7daea497049c1a686d07dab7106e5"]) indicates the following:

- 569 well sample results in Umatilla County, which indicated that 6.33% of the wells have nitrates above 10 ppm, and 33.74 % of the wells have nitrates above 3 ppm.
 - 123 well sample results in Morrow County, which indicated that 20.33% of the wells have nitrates over 10 ppm and 55.28% above 3 ppm
- 5) We really want to get a clear picture of the completeness of information related to domestic wells and contamination in Umatilla and Morrow Counties.
 - Does the State have a count of domestic (excluding public water system) drinking water wells are in use in Morrow and Umatilla County?
 - Does OHA know how many are contaminated with nitrates above 10 mg/l?
 - Do you have a financial or technical assistance program for the testing of existing domestic drinking water wells?

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6) In the information Gabriela Goldfarb sent to EPA on March 19, 2020, the links[†] led us to a list of OHA Drinking Water Services County Contacts, last updated in February 2020. We noticed that neither Morrow nor Umatilla Counties, the two counties associated with the LUB GWMA had a listed point-of-contact.

- What information can you offer on this situation?
- Are there other drinking water technical service providers available to residents in these two counties?

[†] [HYPERLINK

"https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/Documents/staff_county.pdf"]

7) In Gabriela Goldfarb's March 19 email, she indicated that the "CD Summary is a publication of the Oregon Health Authority, Public Health Division. Its intended audience is: licensed health care providers, public health and health care agencies, media representatives, medical laboratories, hospitals, and others with an interest in epidemiology and public health."

- Beyond this type of outreach, how are clinicians and the OHA connected on the topic of nitrates in drinking water?
- Would OHA know if there was a case of methemoglobinemia in Morrow or Umatilla Counties?